



# Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Webinar Series

## Introduction to the Homelessness Prevention Screening Tool Version 2.0

[Link to Audio](#)

# Presenters

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# Our Agenda

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Welcome

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Review Purpose of Homelessness Prevention

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Creation of the New HP Tool

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Introduction to the New Tool

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Grantee Perspective

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Next Steps and Additional Training

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# Purpose of HP Screener

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This screener is for all persons applying for SSVF homelessness prevention assistance (i.e., Category 1, imminently at risk of literal homelessness)

Questions included on the form are intended to be a starting point for a conversation between program staff and the applicant household. That conversation should establish program eligibility, discuss ways to resolve the current housing crisis and obtain necessary information to target homelessness prevention assistance

# Reminders About Homelessness Prevention

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- Rapid Rehousing of literally homeless Veterans remains the top SSVF priority
- *Diversion* is the most targeted form of prevention-revisions to the screener reflect an organic, Veteran-driven approach to housing problem solving and Rapid Resolution services
- When insufficient to meet demand, HP resources must focus on those who will become homeless and, based on the assessment, are most vulnerable or would have most difficult time exiting homelessness

# Inequities Exist in Housing and Homelessness

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- Racially targeted policies and housing discrimination have resulted in a long history of housing insecurity for people of color
  - Redlining and resulting racial wealth gap
  - Discrimination in obtaining housing
  - Cost burden
  - Higher rates of eviction
  - Disproportionate experiences of homelessness
- Structural and institutional racism present in other systems (justice, child welfare, education and within the workforce) have contributed to housing insecurity and homelessness
- **“Members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) community are more likely to become homeless, and once homeless, more likely to endure discrimination and harassment that extends their homelessness.” (HUD Exchange)**

# Screening Into SSVF

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- Where capacity allows, screen in using Stage 1 enrollment to provide services and other referrals (same day enrollments where possible)
- Veterans who don't qualify for full HP financial assistance after the complete assessment may still benefit from program support, mediation services and coordinated referrals
- The HP Screener Version 2.0 assumes all Veterans who meet basic qualification criteria will receive a housing problem solving conversation and further screening and support

# HP Screener Revision Process

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- Stage two factors were revised through a working group with HUD/VA staff and consultation with researchers who work on the issue of homelessness
- Focus groups allowed for feedback from grantees and persons with lived expertise
- Documents were created in a working group that included grantees and Veterans with lived expertise, along with VA and HUD staff



# Pilot Testing

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- The revised tool was tested in 10 communities for a 6-week period
- Testing allowed us to further refine the tool and guidance and gather feedback about training and support needs
- The pilot sites kept track of Stage 2 scoring to help provide grantees guidance on setting an initial threshold score under the new scale

# SSVF Screenings Must be Trauma-Informed

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- SSVF's core concepts include a commitment to Housing First practices, ensuring client choice and service orientation, responding as a crisis response intervention, and ensuring services are provided as-needed and in a progressive, individualized manner.
- Homelessness and unstable housing can cause significant stress and effects similar to other traumatic experiences.
- SSVF services should be grounded in practices consistent with evidence-based, trauma-informed care, such as:
  - establishing a welcoming, safe space
  - being explicit about the purpose of screening and why certain questions are being asked

***It is essential to ensure that the screening does not cause further stress to Veterans during a housing crisis***

# Three Main Purposes of the Tool

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- **Stage One Eligibility:** Veteran status, household income, and imminent risk of literal homelessness. Imminent risk may be established based on the Veteran's initial self-reported circumstances and the Veteran's expectation they will experience literal homelessness in 31 days or less "but for" SSVF assistance
- **Housing Problem Solving:** Housing Problem Solving strategies and, depending on Veteran circumstances, SSVF Rapid Resolution services, should immediately be part of and follow initial Stage 1 eligibility screening. These immediate interventions use an explorative, organic process to better understand the nuances of a Veteran's housing situation
- **Stage Two Threshold Score:** used to screen Veterans for specific housing barriers and vulnerabilities that indicate higher potential risk for literal homelessness and/or higher risk for prolonged literal homelessness if not otherwise prevented

# Stage Two Revisions

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- Stage two is scored on a 100-point scale for ease of use
- Factor weighting has been based on new evidence and research
- Weighting was further refined during pilot testing
- Threshold score for HP TFA Assistance continue to be set locally
  - VA anticipates local changes to threshold score as tool is used and conditions change
  - Threshold score should be consistent across grantees who serve the same geography

# Factor 10 Guidance

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*Household includes one or more members who identifies as an overrepresented population in the homelessness system when compared to the general population*

**Nationwide data from the 2020 AHAR demonstrates that the following racial and ethnic groups are overrepresented in the homelessness system:**

Race/Ethnicity	% of general population	% of those experiencing homelessness
Black/African American	13.4%	39.4%
Hispanic/Latinx	18.5%	22.5%
Native/Pacific Islander	.2%	1.5%
Native/Indigenous	1.3%	3.3%

**In addition, the research demonstrates that LGBT individuals are *twice* as likely as the general population to have experienced homelessness in their lifetime**

# Factor 10 Guidance

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CoCs are encouraged to use local data to better understand disparities that exist in their community but can base their determination on national data if local data is not available.

The following resource can help grantees understand local racial demographics in the homelessness system:

- **CoC Racial Equity Analysis Tool**
  - the tool compares race and ethnicity for the general population, people in poverty and people counted in the 2019 PIT. It includes Veteran PIT data but Veteran breakdown not available for the general population or people in poverty
- Due to a lack of robust data on LGBT status in the homelessness system, there is not currently a tool to support local analysis of sexual orientation and gender identity of those experiencing homelessness. Communities should use local data exists if it exists or defer to national overrepresentation to score this factor
- This factor ***only*** includes household members from groups that have been historically marginalized by race or ethnicity and/or by sexual orientation or gender identity (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer)

# Overview of Tool and Guidance

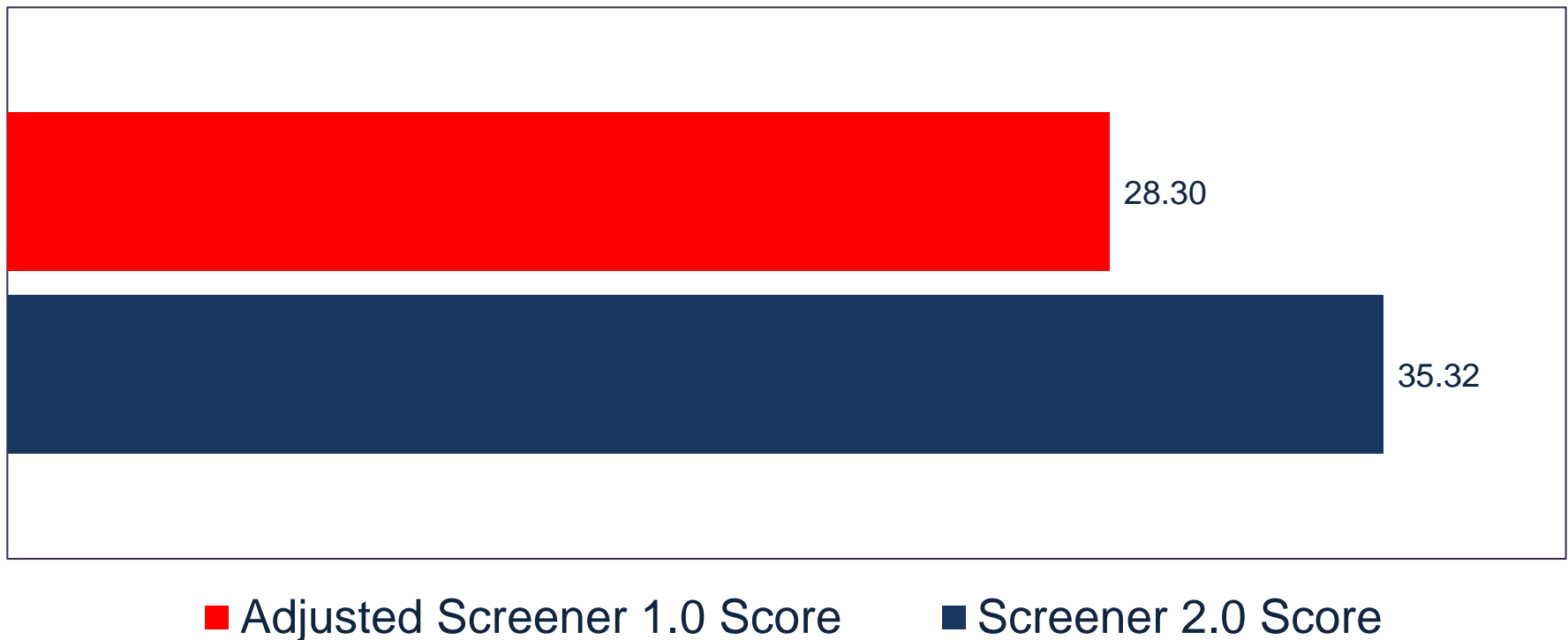
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## Screen Share

# Scoring and Establishing a Threshold Score

Overall data tracking suggests that Veterans are averaging a slightly higher score on the revised screener

**Cumulative Scoring Data through 9/9/2021 N=81**





# Harbor Care

Erin Segaloff, Program Manager

Service Area: New Hampshire



## Grantee Perspective

- Focus group participation
  - Trauma-informed
  - Shorter
  - Need for way to promote equity
- Score Determination
  - Old score vs new score
  - Flexibility with scoring
- Pilot testing experience
- Staffing for our grant
  - Training

# What's Next?

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Prevention Webinar #2 is next Friday September 17<sup>th</sup>

Webinar two will review key core competencies and skills required for all SSVF staff who screen households for Homelessness Prevention. This will include how the HP Screening process intersects with Housing Problem Solving approaches and Rapid Resolution activities.

## LMS Training Curriculum

Will be available to support all staff to better understand the core concepts of the screening process and administer the HP tool in a trauma-informed way.

Upcoming support on equity, including a webinar focused on LGBTQ+

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# Questions?

# Resources/Data References:

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- <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/poverty/reports/2020/10/30/492606/pandemic-exacerbated-housing-instability-renters-color/>
- The 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress, retrieved from <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2020-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>
- United States Census 2020 Population Estimates, retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/POP010220>
- Homelessness Among LGBT Adults in the US, UCLA School of Law Williams Institute, 2020, retrieved from: <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/lgbt-homelessness-us>
- <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5787/coc-analysis-tool-race-and-ethnicity/>

# Supportive Services for Veteran Families

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Thank you

PowerPoint Presentation will be posted on  
<http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvfuniversity.asp>

Questions?

Go To: <http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp>

Email: [SSVF@va.gov](mailto:SSVF@va.gov)